

The

AUGUST 1954 2/6

GEOGRAPHICAL

MAGAZINE



ALL CLASSES OF INSURANCE TRANSACTED

CAR & GENERAL INSURANCE **LTD.**
CORPORATION,

83 PALL MALL, LONDON, S.W.1

A new Departure

IT'S A
GIFT
AT
5/-

THE Mongol monk on the opposite page has an announcement to make. You have met him before in the GEOGRAPHICAL MAGAZINE. He comes back in all his colour to decorate one of the pages of the superb new

1955 GEOGRAPHICAL CALENDAR

Other pages will show Colour Plates of life in Persia, China, the United States, Malta, New Zealand, the Hebrides, Holland, New Guinea, England, Sweden and on Everest. The twelve plates—one per calendar month—have been chosen for geographical variety and photographic merit. In addition a special cover will reproduce a magnificent colour picture of Siamese dancers.

THIS EARLY ANNOUNCEMENT IS MADE TO ENSURE
THAT ENOUGH COPIES ARE PRINTED TO MEET
THE CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR DEMAND FROM
ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD



*Whether you live abroad or in Britain it is not too early
to fill in the coupon NOW or to register your order
with a Bookseller or Newsagent*

12 inches wide
9 inches deep



The Life and Death of a Volcano

by Dr WILLIAM F. FOSHAG

How is a volcano born? And how does it die? These are questions which, until recently, geologists could not answer precisely. But now, with the example of Parícutin before us, we can say how one type of volcano begins and ends. Within a span of nine years we saw the beginnings of a volcano in a cornfield where none existed before, saw the new volcano grow and reach maturity, and then saw it die. For the first time in history the complete life-span of a volcano has been recorded.

The plateau portion of the Mexican State of Michoacán is a region of wooded old volcanic cones, pine-covered lava mesas or tablelands and fertile valleys, and it is to these volcanic features that this part of Mexico owes its distinctive natural beauty. The larger towns are *mestizo*, or Mexican, the villages are populated by Tarascan Indians. San Juan Parangaricutiro was a town of about 4000 people. As is common in this region it bore a Spanish name, San Juan, and an indigenous Tarascan name, Parangaricutiro ("place on the ridge"). It was the *cabecera* of the *municipio*, the seat of a township, that included the village of Parícutin. The 18th-century parochial church, with one tower still uncompleted, was the pride of the town and housed the famous Señor de los Milagros, a saint revered through a wide region.

Parícutin was a pure Tarascan village of about 125 families, speaking the Tarascan tongue and cherishing the old Tarascan lore. Agriculture was the principal industry, and it was particularly noted for its pears. The cultivated fields in the valleys were privately owned but much of the surrounding forestland, or *monte*, was the communal property of the village. As important sources of timber, turpentine and rosin, these forests were valuable assets to the community. The inhabitants went each morning to their fields or the forest to work and returned each evening to their homes.

About two miles south of San Juan Parangaricutiro, and just over a mile east of Parícutin, lay one of these peaceful valleys. Its northern flank was a long volcanic ridge which contained three ancient and extinct craters. The small cultivated valley, the trimly

regular volcanic cones and the flat lava mesas covered with open woods of pine and oak, and beyond the high forested mass of Mt Tancítaro, gave this spot a particularly pleasant and serene aspect.

But this delightful little valley was the scene of many altercations and of violence for a deep feeling of animosity existed between San Juan Parangaricutiro and Parícutin over these lands. This feeling had its origin many years ago, when San Juan, as an expanding political centre, bought communal lands from the neighbouring villages, including some in this valley from Parícutin. The Parícutenos claimed that San Juan took more than it paid for. The dispute continued, gaining in acrimony with the years until the San Juanenses dared not pass upon the lands of Parícutin. No accord or compromise could be agreed upon, and even adjudication in the courts in favour of San Juan did not bring harmony to the two places. Only an act of God could settle the account, and this was soon to come to the region.

On February 5, 1943, tremors began to shake the area and strange noises were



A. J. Thornton



photographs, except two, by the author

It was in such a cornfield in central Mexico that tremors began on February 5, 1943, heralding the appearance of a new volcano—Parícutin. Nine years later it was extinct, but the country for miles around was devastated: a valley, a village and a town were buried 600 feet deep in lava

heard deep in the earth. These noises and tremors increased in number and intensity until the shocks reached more than 200 per day. They seemed to centre in the valley, which led some to believe that a nearby old volcanic cone would reopen its craters.

On February 20 Dionisio Pulido, of Parícutin village, was working on his farm. With him were his wife Paula, who watched the sheep, and Demetrio Toral, a deaf-mute, who did the ploughing. It was the dry season when the days are calm and the skies are clear. This day the subterranean noises seemed to be more frequent, more distinct, and immediately below the farm they were like thunder, or like a stone falling down a deep well.

It was past four o'clock when Paula saw a fissure open in the ground, followed by a small rising plume of dust. Immediately there was a "pfaft"—a noise like the opening of a bottle of soda-water—and a cake of earth rose to the height of six or seven feet, and a column of smoke arose with a whistle and a smell of sulphur.

Toral had just drawn a furrow with his oxen and plough, when the earth arose in it.

Dionisio Pulido has given us the first account of the birth of a volcano.

"In the afternoon, after midday, I joined my wife and son, who were watching the sheep, and inquired if anything new had occurred, since for two weeks we had felt strong *temblores* in the region. Paula replied yes, she had heard noise and thunder underground. Scarcely had she finished speaking when I myself heard a noise, like thunder during a rainstorm, but I could not explain it, for the sky above was clear and the day was so peaceful, as it is in February.

"At four o'clock I left my wife to set fire to a pile of branches which Demetrio and I had gathered. I went to burn the branches when I noticed that a long fissure had opened. Here is something new and strange, thought I, and I searched the ground for marks to see whether or not it had opened in the night but could find none; and I saw that it was a kind of fissure that had only a depth of half a metre. I set about igniting the branches again, when I felt a thunder, the trees trembled, and I turned and saw how, in the hole, the ground swelled and raised itself—two or two-and-a-half metres high—and a kind of

smoke or fine dust—grey, like ashes—began to rise up in a portion of the crack that I had not previously seen. Immediately more smoke began to rise, with a hiss or whistle, loud and continuous, and there was a smell of sulphur. I hardly knew what to do, so stunned was I. Finally my wits returned and I recalled the sacred Señor de los Milagros, which was in the church in San Juan, and in a loud voice I cried: 'Santo de los Milagros, you brought me into this world—now save me from the dangers in which I am about to die,' and I looked towards the fissure from whence rose the smoke, and my fear for the first time disappeared. I ran to see if I could save my family and my companions and my oxen, but I did not see them, and thought that they had taken the oxen to the spring for water; but I saw that there was no longer any water in the spring, and, very frightened, I mounted my mare and galloped to Parícutin, where I found my wife and son and friends waiting, fearing that I might be dead and that they would never see me again."

News soon reached San Juan that a strange conflagration had broken out on Dionisio's farm. The rising smoke-column could be plainly seen from the plaza. A youth with a camera went to the edge of the town and photographed it, the first of a new volcano. The people gathered in the plaza with the *Presidente* and the *Cura* to discuss the apparition. The *Presidente* then chose a delegation to investigate this happening, and the *Cura* gave them his blessing since the mission would be a dangerous one in which they might lose their lives.

When they reached the valley they found that a fissure had opened up in the earth. At the southern end of it was a small depressed area surrounded by a thin crevice from which issued smoke and small incandescent stones. While they watched, the walls of the orifice fell in. In the vent the earth was "boiling" like the sand in a rising spring, with a noise like a cauldron of water boiling vigorously.

One of them collected two of

the incandescent stones and some of the fine ejected dust, and the group returned to San Juan where they reported what they had seen. The *Cura* consulted a book on Vesuvius and it was decided that it was a volcano. The stones, still hot, were delivered to the *Cura*, who placed them in a bowl and exorcised them, with a prayer that the volcano should cease.

In the morning, the mound of clinkers that formed the new volcano was thirty feet high. By afternoon it was a hundred. On the third day it was measured at 550 feet in altitude.

On the day following the outbreak of this

Parícutin a month after its initial outbreak, belching a 24,000-foot column of ash and smoke. In the foreground the stream of lava advances over the shrivelled fields





(Above) After four months the lava had reached the village of Paricutin, already deep in ash. The villagers in desperation tried to fend off disaster by placing crosses before their houses, but in vain. Though the Mexican government had offered them land elsewhere, they were loth to desert their homes and ruined fields; the lava's advance left them no alternative and even (left) in San Juan Parangaricutiro, the neighbouring town a few miles away, the inhabitants were beginning to bundle their possessions together and go in spite of the attractions offered by an unexpected tourist trade

As the months passed the volcano assumed new guises. By day a column of smoke dominated the scene; at night a terrifying firework display of red-hot stones and lava added to the advancing stream of destruction. (Right) In July 1943 the shape of the cone was altered, its lip broken by the lava flow. (Below) Explosions of viscous lava in August



(Right) The tide of ash had risen over Parícutin village by January 1944 so that the roofs of houses showed as hummocks. The church was still visible above the surface, but behind it the high front of the lava flow went on advancing. By this time the cone of the volcano was rounded and smooth, and the pillar of smoke had diminished considerably



new volcano, which they named after due deliberation "Volcano de Parícutin", the village council of San Juan sent a plea for help to the Federal and State governments.

On March 23, 1943, I arrived on the scene with a party of geologists from Washington, to observe on the spot the volcano's development.

At first bombs only were ejected in tremendous quantities from the crater, twelve hundred or more tons per minute. Great bursts of incandescent stones followed one another in rapid succession and rained down upon the slopes of the new volcano. Lava soon began to flow, a rocky mass of rubble that advanced irresistibly over the cultivated fields. Here and there, where doughy lava forced its way through its clinkery cover, the incandescent flowing molten rock could be seen. Nothing could stay its advance.

After a month of violent bomb activity a, dense, billowing, black eruptive column appeared, accompanied by great 'flames' or fountains of incandescent material. The number of heavy explosions increased; a deep roar

appeared to come from the depths of the earth. A huge column rose high in the air. Its top spread out like a cumulus cloud, distinct against the cloudless sky. Its apogee was measured by triangulation at 24,000 feet. Stones fell in a fiery rain upon the cone and rolled down the slopes in a myriad of looping arcs resembling, as one visitor expressed it, "the queen in all her jewels".

The ash cloud now hung over the region and a smoky haze dimmed the light of the sun. The cultivated fields were doomed and the surrounding forests shrivelled and turned brown. Deer fled the region, and with them the coyotes, but the squirrels stayed to feed on the ripened pine nuts. Many of the birds, too, remained, for there would always be insects brought in by the winds and battered down by the raining ash. Jays were amply supplied in this manner. We often marvelled at the indifference of the crows as they foraged high up on the cone among the falling ash and bombs. The humming-birds seemed to be the principal avian sufferers, for the flowers were gone: we sometimes found glit-

After thirteen months: in the surrounding countryside the native Tarascans still carried on with their daily tasks as best they could. Fine volcanic ash covered the country for miles around, so that woodmen on the way to work in the scorched forests raised clouds of dust as they walked

Arno Brehme





(Above) The owner of a house in Parangaricutiro watching its utter destruction by the slowly advancing lava-wall. Everything removable was taken away in time but much that was precious had to be left behind, such as the pear trees, which he especially regretted. (Right) From the parish church the townspeople of Parangaricutiro took the altar, font, confessionals and the famous statue of the Señor de los Milagros before the church was engulfed in the inexorably advancing lava





In July 1944 Parangaricutiro was already half submerged in the lava-flow (on the left) and ash

tering bodies partly buried in the ash. Frogs shrivelled and dried, and snakes found the loose, ashy terrain difficult to traverse; but it was strange to see how the dogs and horses of the Tarascans ignored even the most violent explosive bursts of the volcano.

On June 9 a remarkable change took place in the volcano. The tall and majestic column of steam and ash began to diminish perceptibly, and the rumbling roar subsided. We watched it from the village in amazement, and when it was entirely still, we shouted "Dead". The Presidente, a few of the elders and I stepped into the *cantina* to celebrate the monster's demise. But at nightfall a few deep-throated rumbles came from the inner volcano and by midnight the thunder from the crater rolled around the encircling forest in a reverberating and terrifying din. At two o'clock there was a mighty roar—then silence. I went to the door of our cabin, but could see nothing. Later, as the dust cleared away, I could see a great notch in the profile of the cone, but it remained for the light of morning to reveal what had happened. The north side of the volcano now lay in two high terraces that moved slowly forward. During the day moving lava broke out from the base of the

lower terrace, lava vents and fountains opened high on the broken cone; fiery red tongues of molten rock fell in huge cascades down the terraces, or masses of viscous lava rolled in incandescent balls down the slope. Each day flows of lava moved here and there. One, moving to the north, finally debouched into the valley in which the village lay.

Early one morning Don Felipe, the Presidente, came galloping to my cabin. "Parícutin will be destroyed," he announced in agitation. I followed him to the village and found the lava approaching the outskirts of the town. Groups of villagers gathered around us asking "Don Guillermo, what shall we do?" I explained that there was no immediate danger because Parícutin was situated on a low ridge and the slope was away from the village; but urged them, since their fields were ruined and the means of their livelihood were gone, to accept the offer by their government of new land elsewhere. This was sad advice to a people so deeply attached to their lands. But the next morning when I visited the village, the trucks had arrived and the exodus was already under way. Down the road to San Juan streamed the villagers, the men in their white pyjama-like *calzones*, carrying a

bundle, a grindstone, or a chest; the women, in their dress of many colours, leading a child, a cow, or a loaded burro, leaving the government trucks to follow with household effects and furniture. In a few days Parícutin was deserted by all living things.

More ash fell, the lava spread, and the cone continued to grow. Periods of mild activity alternated with nights of terrifying explosions. During the mildest periods a wispy column of vapour rose lazily from the crater, accompanied by a deep-throated grating roar. Usually, however, a column of steam and ash billowed upwards with a noise like a heavy surf upon a rocky coast. Night-time showed the orange incandescent bombs rise in regular pulsations high into the sky. But most terrifying were the nights when, with little ash or vapour column, monstrous bubbles of lava rose above the crater rim and, bursting, hurled huge masses of viscous lava into a gigantic flowerpot pattern.

Now the situation in San Juan also became untenable. The arable fields were deeply buried in ash, in which corn sprouted but soon withered and died; and the communal pine forest was completely destroyed. The government renewed its offer to resettle the

inhabitants. The Mexican population, realizing the hopelessness of the situation, accepted, but the Tarascans, unwilling to leave their church and their saint, elected to remain.

On October 19, 1943, the activity of the volcano suddenly changed. A fissure rent the cone and the lava flows below it. Seven vents aligned towards the north-east spouted vapours and incandescent blobs of lava; then they subsided until, a few days later, but one remained. This grew into a small edifice at the foot of Parícutin. The Tarascans called this new cone Zapichu, "the Little One". The main cone now settled down but Zapichu sent up a continuous fountain of incandescent rocks 600 feet high. On the last day of Zapichu a rosy glow from the west base of the cone indicated some new event, and next morning, January 8, we found there three new lava vents and a lava stream moving towards the south along the base of the cone. This new flow, after a pause of several months, resumed its advance and moved into the valley of San Juan. It had moved in a wide circle to approach the town from behind. When the lava reached the cemetery the San Juanenses assembled there and all, upon their knees, sang a solemn litany, a supplication to

Six months later the tower of the church was all that could be seen of a town of 4000 inhabitants



spare the town. But the lava, covering the cemetery, moved on, and began to invade the streets.

People started to dismantle their houses, which the Tarascan construction of hewn logs readily permitted. As the lava approached the church the sacred Señor de los Milagros was carried in procession to the highway accompanied by not only the San Juanenses but also the population of all the surrounding villages. Hosts of people from Uruapan awaited the revered image and accompanied it to safety in their town. The church was now dismantled, the old altar and baptismal font and the confessionals were removed—everything but the *milagros* or painted votive offerings, which remained scattered over the floor and were later covered by ash. One, which I salvaged, depicted a woman in prayer in front of a cottage with frightened animals in the *patio* and the new volcano in full eruption.

Now, Parícutin volcano settled into a reduced but continuous activity. Each day lava flowed from one vent or another, but ash no longer harried the countryside. Where the ash was deep the forests withered and died. But where it was thin and the simple ploughs of the country folk could turn the soil, crops flourished as never before. White prickly poppies with golden centres, pink nicotiana

and scarlet gillia prospered and young pine seedlings began a cycle of reforestation.

Nine years of continuous activity went by with hardly an hour's pause. On its ninth birthday, in February 1952, the volcano was as vigorous as in the raging days of its youth. And then, on March 4, as suddenly as it began, the eruption ceased.

The beautiful valley is now filled with ash and lava, in places to a depth of 600 feet or more. No trace of Parícutin village remains. The site of San Juan Parangaricutiro can be recognized most easily by the massive church tower that rises out of torn and twisted rock.

Acres of lava cover the tillable lands and a heavy blanket of ash has destroyed the forest for some miles around. But saddest is the lot of the San Juanenses and the Parícuteños, driven from their beloved *tierra* to strange localities where many sickened and died.

The volcanoes of Michoacán follow a simple pattern. They open in virgin terrain, endure a week, a month, a year, nine years, sometimes more, then cease forever. This we believe will be the history of Parícutin. Now still, it will probably never erupt again. In a few years the pines and the prickly poppy will cover it, and the fiery volcano, once so *muy bravo*, will be but another feature of the Michoacán landscape.

By July 1945, after two-and-a-half years of violence and destruction, Parícutin had settled down to a reduced but continuous activity which lasted for over six more years before its extinction



Birds of Swamp and Shore in North America

by JAMES FISHER

Mr Fisher has written many books on ornithology and natural history and is well known as a broadcaster on these subjects. The following article contains some first-fruits of an American journey to be more fully recorded in a book entitled Through Wild America in which he is collaborating with the American ornithologist Roger Peterson and which Messrs Collins will publish next year

THE eastern seaboard of the United States is part of the longest continuous beach-lagoon-delta coast in the world. Nowhere in its thousands of miles of coast south of New England is there anything remotely resembling a cliff. Civilized, urbanized, exploited by drill and mine and industry as the United States now are, yet this coast still guards millions of acres of swamps, some still *primaeval*: cypress swamps, saw-grass swamps, palmetto swamps, mangrove swamps.

Until recently no man had passed, by his own sole effort, from one end of the Everglades of Florida to another, and not even the loggers ('bought out' by the Federal Government seven years ago) ever penetrated to the whole of the fabulous Okefenokee Swamp, where the Suwanee River rises and which occupies an area of South Georgia as big as Buckinghamshire. Not even the most experienced local naturalists (and there are some good ones) know the Singer tract of Louisiana (the largest tract of virgin timber left in the Mississippi Delta), or the cypress mazes of the Apalachicola River in North Florida, well enough to say whether the ivory-billed woodpecker survives. The marshes of North America are still as full of mystery as they are of frogs.

Last year my American friend Roger Peterson, ornithologist painter, escorted me on an incredible bird-watching trip of some 30,000 miles, which took us from Newfoundland to Alaska by way of the continental United States (of both Atlantic and Pacific seabords) and tropical Mexico! Most of this trip was by motor-car; and we visited most of the principal marsh and shore parks and wild-life refuges of the United States. In one season I more than doubled the list of birds I had seen in my life; and never had I seen such a galaxy of water-birds. No wonder that one of the latest excursions of Hollywood's Walt Disney into natural history, his film

Water-birds, is so great a success.

Human memory is short. How many of us remember the scenes in London auction rooms in the decades around the turn of the century, when beauty died to profit greed and pander to vanity? It was not until 1922 that the Importation of Plumage (Prohibition) Act was passed in Britain, although Lord Avebury first tried to introduce a measure into the Lords as early as 1908. Similar laws were passed, often earlier, in most of the civilized countries of the world. But before these laws, an unholy pressure was exerted on the populations of some of the most beautiful wild birds of the world. Few birds suffered more than the herons and terns of the eastern United States, and particularly of Florida, where the tale of slaughter was written in blood—and not all of it bird blood: two human beings were killed by plume-hunters in the Everglades!

Some evidence of the extent of the slaughter for the plume-trade is given by auction-sale figures from London in the first decade of the present century. These figures may be somewhat inflated, as they are of skins and packages *offered*; and those unsold at one auction were usually offered again at the next. But between 1902 and 1909 from 1000 to 2400 packages of "osprey" plumes were handled every year, which must have come from 100,000 to 250,000 individual herons. In 1905 over 4000 tern skins were handled, in 1906 over 20,000, in 1908 over 50,000. There were 15,000 kingfishers' skins at one sale in 1906, over 20,000 at another in 1907 and no less than 162,750 at a sale in June, 1913. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds found little difficulty (with the aid of some pungent pamphlets by W. H. Hudson) in arousing public opinion.

In the United States perhaps the worst depredations had the terns as their victims; all along the coast from Texas to New England

the plume-robbers worked, perhaps most destructively in Virginia. As many as 1200 birds were often killed in a day; and one of the plume-hunters told A. C. Bent that as many as 100,000 terns were killed in a season on one famous Virginian nesting-island alone. If it had not been for Theodore Roosevelt's election as President of the United States in 1901 the terns might never have come back. During his term of office he signed documents creating no less than 38 Federal refuges, and started a system that has not merely saved the North American marsh- and shore-birds, but brought them under an organized protection that should be the envy of Europe, where these things are only taken seriously (with a few exceptions) in the more northerly countries.

When Audubon was in South Carolina in the early 1830s he met a person "who, on offering a double-barrelled gun to a gentleman near Charleston for 100 white herons fresh killed, received that number and more the next day." His friend John Bachman got tired of shooting them after he had killed 46 in one day. In Florida, in 1880, W. E. D. Scott had found "thousands", or "myriads", of breeding birds: eight species of herons and pelicans on Anclote Keys; great roseate spoon-bill and white ibis colonies, the latter "as if a big white sheet had been thrown over the mangroves". But when he came back in 1886

he saw but four pelicans and two or three herons on Anclote Keys; the spoonbills and white ibises had gone from their colonies; at Macleod Island was a pile of over 200 half-decayed reddish egret corpses, stripped of plumes and wings, among thousands of broken eggs: practically every adult at one 90-pair pelican colony was killed, the three-week young being left to starve; one man employed about fifty gunners, and one gunner said he had got over 400 plume-birds in less than four days at one rookery.

By 1900 the plume-birds of Florida were almost done. In 1901, under pressure from William T. Dutcher, who later became president of the National Association of Audubon Societies, the Florida State Legislature at last enacted bird-protection laws. The Audubon Societies, and not the State, provided the first wardens; one of them, appointed in 1902, was Guy Bradley. He lived at the fishing-village of Flamingo, at the edge of the Glades near Cape Sable, where his father was a land-agent.

On July 8, 1905, Walter Smith and his sons Tom and Dan, habitual plume-hunters and game-law-breakers, went to Oyster Keys, off Flamingo, in Walter's schooner. Tom and Dan took a small boat to the heron rookery and started shooting; their shots were heard by Bradley, who sailed at once from Flamingo in his skiff. When he reached the schooner



A. J. Thornton



All photographs by the au

Early morning on the Chipola River, a tributary of North Florida's Apalachicola River. For hours the author and his friend Roger Peterson sought a glimpse or sound of the last of the ivory-billed woodpeckers, reputed to survive there, but they found only a recent roost-hole in a cypress hung with air-plants and festooned with Spanish moss



America's alligator, an abundant swamp animal from the Carolinas southward, is found in great numbers in the Florida Everglades. At night they lie at the surface, and sometimes roar; across pools and sloughs torch-beams can pick out the dull fire-red reflections of their eyes



Confined to the mangrove zone of Florida, the great white heron of America has its own National Refuge. Its population, reduced to about 150 individuals by the hurricane of 1935, has since then multiplied by more than ten. It is probably a white colour-phase of the great blue heron

Tom and Dan had already come aboard with dead birds.

When Bradley reached the schooner he tried to arrest Tom Smith. As he stood, or sat, talking in his skiff, Walter Smith shot him in the shoulder; the bullet travelled on, down his back. Bradley fell in the bottom of his boat; and the Smiths at once sailed off, not stopping to see if he was dead. Eventually he was, though it seems certain he must have died slowly; his brother Louis found him next day, his skiff's sail snagged in the mangroves, his body in blood on the boards.

Guy Bradley is buried in a lonely place near Cape Sable, his grave marked by a bronze tablet put up by the Audubon Societies. Three years after he was killed another Audubon warden, Columbus McLeod, was killed near Charlotte Harbour.

Walter Smith went free: a grand jury deemed the evidence insufficient to bring him to trial. Smith pointed out a bullet-hole in his mast, and said that Bradley shot first; but Bradley's loaded gun had not been fired.

In 1910 New York State, home of what had become the United States' plumage-millinery business with a \$17,000,000 capital, passed its Audubon Plumage Bill. The plumage market was—more or less—bust. As far as the United States heron rookeries were concerned, it certainly was; indeed, the death of Bradley signalized the turning of the corner. One of the pioneers of the conservation and recovery programme of North America's herons was the late E. A. McIlhenny in Louisiana. Near his home at Avery Island by the coast was a small pond among the curious salt-domes, where a few green herons and least bitterns nested. McIlhenny raised the water-level with a dam. In 1895 he took the eight young from a couple of snowy egrets' nests, and caged them at the pond's edge until they were tame. Two pairs of these nested the next year and reared eight young; in 1897 five pairs raised twenty young. Today the famous Avery Island heronry contains a vast population of many species, members of which nest on platforms on raised poles in mid-water; alligators slowly glide under nesting snowy egrets, American egrets, Louisiana herons; and by the lakeside nest little blues, greens, yellow-crowned night-herons, bitterns, least bitterns, rails, ducks and the snake-bird. This artificial heronry, as we ourselves found, is one of the most interesting phenomena of American bird-protection.

My first days among North America's herons and swamp-birds were spent in that 'river', a hundred miles long and fifty miles

wide, the Everglades of Florida, that unique river of saw-grass. Between sixty and seventy inches of rain fall on south Florida in the course of a year (mostly in the spring and summer), are caught by this sponge of low vegetation, the Everglades, and flow slowly, southerly, through it; flow visibly only when the water runs high after the rains. Over a third of the Everglades are neither water nor land, but something between the two. Below the saw-grass is the muck: the black soil of plant decay, the sticky basis of the great slow bog-river; and below the muck a sedimentary oolitic limestone. Here and there are islands where the limestone comes to the surface; most of them run north and south as the dissolving stream gently flows past them, and upon these hammocks, or Indian island gardens, grow West Indian trees in jungle tangles.

No part of the Everglades National Park is more than eight feet above average low-water mark, and flowing southwards and slightly west, its waters merge imperceptibly with those of the Gulf of Mexico; at least, the merging would be imperceptible were it not for the mangroves. These extraordinary plants build land on salt-water mud; but land so impenetrable as to be of use only to animals, not to man.

The mangroves occupy the entire south-west half of the park, growing wherever the water is salt—all over the islets or keys in Florida Bay, round the entire coast and round the multitudinous creeks and river mouths; fingers of mangrove poke up all the rivers until with the last of the salt water the growth is only of hedge thickness. Beyond this, the 'rivers' continue into the saw-grass interior, winding, joining chains of lakes, joining and rejoining each other, forming a maze which to the new traveller is an inextricable, complete confusion of rock, mud, plant and water.

Some Everglades water-tracts, too higgledy-piggledy and choked with vegetation to be called rivers, and yet with a system and flow of their own, are called sloughs; the big Taylor Slough which meets the mangroves near Crocodile Point is crossed at its top end by the highway into the Park; and here we pulled up at a parking-place. A notice said ANHINGA TRAIL, and an elevated board-walk invited us, cameras and all, into the middle of the slough.

One of the most gratifying results of the creation of national parks and nature reserves in the United States is the tameness of the indigenous wild animals. Only in North America, so far, has it been possible widely to



E. A. McIlhenny started this 'artificial' heronry at Avery Island on the coast of Louisiana in 1895. Thousands of herons of seven species now nest on the lake-platforms or in the protected cover around the estate, in complete freedom. It was here that forty years ago Dr Julian Huxley made his pioneer studies on the behaviour of herons. This portion of the sanctuary is occupied by American egrets



Kodachrome

Roger Peterson

With its black legs and yellow feet, the snowy egret should probably be regarded as of the same species as the little egret of Europe; like that bird, it nests in tree-cover on islets in lakes. The bird here portrayed was a member of a colony living on the great Lake Okeechobee in Florida

combine the national parks (where man is encouraged) with the nature reserves (from which, at least in the old days, man was supposed to be kept right away). Here, on Anhinga Trail, under our feet as they clattered over the board-walk, floated sleepy alligators. Quietly on its huge feet a purple gallinule bobbed and jerked about the water-lily leaves and stepped, like a proud chicken, across our board-walk. On a bush overhanging still water in the slough sat a water-turkey, the trail's own *Anhinga*, turning its head from side to side to watch the visitors. And like a ghost, among the waterside sedges at the slough-edge, stood quite still one of the rarest birds in the world, the great white heron of America. It was twenty yards away: fifty years before, A. C. Bent in Florida Bay could not get within two or three hundred yards of one! Roger's movie started on all lenses and my Leicas were busy.

The great white heron suffered from the plume-traders with the others. But it does not seem ever to have been very near extinction by human beings: indeed, Nature has probably been harder on it than man. Its breeding distribution has always been confined, appar-

ently, to the mangrove zone of Florida—to Florida Bay and the great chain of Florida Keys, in which the special Great White Heron National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1938. At that time the great bird had been decimated by the hurricane of 1935. Just after it, Alexander Sprunt Jr, of the National Audubon Society, could find less than 150 birds in nine-tenths of their range. But so remarkable are the powers of recovery of herons that seven years later Earle R. Greene of the Fish and Wildlife Service found that the population of great white herons was up to between 1500 and 1800 birds.

We had many good days with America's marsh-birds, often in the company of the great naturalist Herbert Stoddard. With his help I saw, for the first time in my life, over a hundred species of birds in one day. Our visit to McIlhenny's Sanctuary on Avery Island was memorable; and so was the day we passed on the Chipola River, a tributary of the Apalachicola River, starting before light in an attempt to see or hear one of the last ivory-billed woodpeckers—even though the attempt was vain and all we found was a recently-used roosting-hole. But we saw a lot



(Left) On Anhinga Trail, in the Everglades National Park, a purple gallinule struts tamely among the reeds at the visitor's feet. This individual has become well known, and is certainly the most photographed gallinule in the world. Throughout south Florida this handsome species is getting tame and beginning to become a familiar bird of marsh- and river-side gardens, as the moorhen is in England. (The moorhen, incidentally, is likewise found in Florida, where it is rather wild and is known as the "Florida gallinule".) (Below) Also tame was a small party of lesser scaup ducks, which Roger Peterson photographed resting on a Florida beach, a little late on their northward migration

Kodachrome



of other birds and many lovely snakes and turtles.

The greatest paradise for shore-birds in the United States is the ternery of the Dry Tortugas, the only coral islands of the United States, at the very end of the Florida Keys. The Tortugas are one coral atoll, mostly submerged; at present the atoll breaks surface in seven different places (formerly ten), of which the largest are Loggerhead Key, site of the present lighthouse, Bush Key and Garden Key.

This last is almost wholly occupied by one of the most extraordinary human artefacts in the New World, the slave-built, brick-built, hexagon-built Fort Jefferson, with its fifty-foot endless wall, eight feet thick, with sites for 450 guns in its three storeys and mile of galleries. This fort was started in 1846, primarily as a defence against the threat of British expansion; and for thirty years the work of building went on. By the time it was nearing completion the fort was defensively obsolete; and the British never came, except as tourists! Subsequently it was used as a prison, as a coaling station, as a wireless station; now it has become a picturesque ruin, since 1935 a National Monument under the Department of

the Interior. There is a resident Superintendent, and the National Monument, which embraces the whole archipelago, is, through its very inaccessibility, a perfect natural sanctuary for the tropical sea-birds that breed in thousands on the coral sands and in the bay-cedars of Bush Key. For nobody can visit the Dry Tortugas except he be self-supporting, with his own vessel.

Stephen Briggs of Florida took us to the Tortugas with Bob Allen, in his yacht *Ungava*, across seventy miles of flying-fish sea. Tropical sea bathes the Dry Tortugas, even though they are over eighty miles north of the Tropic of Cancer, for the water heated by the Caribbean's tropical sun circulates their way; everything about them is tropical: their coral, their fish, their bay-cedars, buttonwoods, cactuses, moonvines and sea-beans. But the most convincing sign of the tropicality of the Dry Tortugas is their sea-birds. Audubon saw these tropical birds in 1832; indeed, he found some probably breeding on the Tortugas that nobody has found since. He stayed in Key West that summer, and visited the Tortugas in the U.S. revenue cutter *Marion*; already with the publication of over a hundred plates of his

Bob Allen, Florida naturalist and Audubon Society Research Associate, shows the scale of the iron cannon mounted on the roof of Fort Jefferson, Dry Tortugas. One of the costliest of human artefacts ever erected, the fort was obsolete before it was finished, and is now a National Monument





This is tropical North America: the tern island of the Dry Tortugas 100 miles from the mainland of Florida. It was probably the first sea-bird colony seen by Western man in what is now the U.S.A. Perhaps 80,000 pairs of sooty terns were nesting on Bush Key when the author was there in May 1953





The noddies of Bush Key nest in the bay cedars above the crowd of sooty terns. These two species of tropical terns dominate the coral-island bird communities of the world. Two or three hundred pairs of noddies nest on the islands of the Tortugas—and in no other part of the United States

immortal *Birds of America* he was famous, and privileged to voyage in government ships.

The terneries that Audubon found were probably on Loggerhead and Bird Keys; the latter was washed away in the hurricane of 1935, when the terns moved to Bush Key. It is not possible to reconstruct the populations of sooty terns, the ground-nesters of Bird Key, and of noddies, the bush-nesters of Bird and Loggerhead, from Audubon's account; but he found a crew of 'egggers' from Havana on Bird Key with a load of eight tons of eggs. This means a quarter of a million eggs; of course they may not all have come from the Tortugas, but unquestionably there was a huge colony in Audubon's time; and since then there has been a spectacular decline in the only tropical tern population of the United States. No doubt this was primarily the work of egggers; uncontrolled, these people can undo a large population of social birds in a very few years. Anyway, in 1903, the first year from which we have any reliable information about the size of the ternery, there were only between 3000 and 4000 sooties' nests, and 200 noddies'. In some later years there have been fewer noddies' nests than that on the bay-

cedars of Bush Key—in 1940 there were only 90—but never have there been fewer sooties'. The turn of the century was (as we have seen) a terrible time for Florida's birds, with commercial human persecution; but slowly the sooty tern population climbed back, to nine or ten thousand nests between 1907 and 1917; culminating in 95,438 in 1950, as estimated by Willard Dilley.

Clearly there was room on Bush Key, and on its neighbour Long Key, and the little half-key that joined them together, for the nests of even more sooties on the sands: the Tortugas were by no means full up, and it was obviously possible that if the islands had been of about the same area in 1832 they could have supported enough terns to produce the eight tons of eggs that Audubon mentioned.

Returning to the mainland, we visited bird-sanctuaries and nature reserves on the Louisiana and Texas coasts. I have already mentioned Avery Island; at Lydia Ann Island, in a Texas lagoon, we watched many waders, and filmed the nesting reddish egret and a noisy colony of handsome royal terns, after running the gauntlet of the world's most adhesive mud: as we looked round the dense



Lydia Ann Island, in the long lagoon of southern Texas, is one of the many sea-bird refuges of the Gulf Coast. Those who wade ashore through its treacle-mud may photograph (above) nesting royal terns and (below) rare reddish egrets. One egret chick is of the interesting white phase



bird-life of that day we blessed the legislators and wild-life administrators of the United States' present, and not so very long-ago past. At the Laguna Atascosa and Santa Ana refuges in South Texas, Luther Goldman showed us no less than 132 species in a day, of which 38 were new life-birds to me; my first Mexican grebe, white pelican, black-bellied tree-duck, western sandpiper, marbled godwit, Wilson's phalarope among them.

Once across the deserts of Texas, New Mexico and Arizona, we picked up marsh-birds again in a wild-life refuge in southern California, the curious Salton Sea; about the size of the Dead Sea, and, like it, below sea-level; and formed as late as 1905. Many birds have colonized it: gull-billed terns, which had never before nested in the Western States; laughing gulls, whose nearest breeding-place is a thousand miles away in Texas; white pelicans, Caspian terns, black-necked stilts, avocets . . . In winter thousands of ducks live there, for whom the Federal Refuge grows winter fodder. This Salton Sea could, by its look and life, have been in Texas; not until we reached the Pacific Coast did we see, for the first time in about 10,000 miles, a cliff.

Perhaps the Coronados were the high spot of our Continental Pacific trip, for there we found sea-animals almost as numerous and wonderful as those we later found in the Bering Sea (which is another story). We travelled to them from San Diego, California, in a vessel belonging to the Scripps Institute of Oceanography, with Dr Carl Hubbs of that institute, Mrs Hubbs and Lewis Wayne Walker: three naturalists who knew the islands well.

There are four islands of the Coronados, whose northern point is three miles within the Mexican border; they are about seven miles offshore and twenty-five from San Diego. We visited South Island first; it is the largest, about two miles long and 672 feet high, and on its seaward side, enclosed by a sweep of shattered, slabby cliffs, is a beach. Skilfully the ship's crew landed us from whale-boats where a rock staircase lay steep-to. We scrambled up, looked over a shoulder of rock, and found ourselves within a few yards of a great herd of California sea-lions.

The Coronado herd consists of a few hundreds, and has increased lately under protection. As we advanced into the rookery the

Elegant American avocets feeding in a dyke by the hot shores of the inland, salt Salton Sea, a bird refuge in southern California. Like many protected birds they are increasing, and have become comparatively tame under the management of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service





Rock, sand, islet and headland mix happily on the Pacific coast of the United States.

(Left) At Point Lobos, a famous California sanctuary, pigeon-guillemots—the same species as the British black guillemot or tystie—dive and play between the rocks, or sun themselves and display to each other in the neighbourhood of their nest-crevices.

(Below) Offshore, herds of California sea-lions bask on their islets, often shared with colonies of Brandt's cormorant: a sea-bird which occupies, in the eastern Pacific, a place in Nature filled in many parts of the Atlantic by the European cormorant



great bulls, and then the cows, took to the water where they swam, frisking and back-peddaling and barking, while we made friends with their pups. We did not keep the cows long away from their offspring; but before we left we made close acquaintance with two other magnificent sea-animals that had hauled out in the rookery. These were young male northern elephant-seals from the suboceanic island of Guadalupe, about 160 miles off the Lower California coast, 240 miles or so to the south—or possibly from the San Benito Islands further south still. This great animal was thought to be almost extinct when a small group was rediscovered on Guadalupe in 1892. Probably the world population had then been brought below a hundred, by uncontrolled commercial exploitation. Under protection by the Mexican Government the species recovered, slowly at first, fairly quickly from 1910 to 1930, and since 1930 in geometrical progression; early in 1950 George A. Bartholomew Jr and Carl Hubbs found no less than 4548 on Guadalupe and 908 on the San Benitos. Our two young males were the overspill from this rising population, and perhaps the vanguard of a new colonization of the Coronados. They were much more sluggish than the sea-lions, and very unready to take to the water, and gave a fine display of roaring and nose-inflation before finally shuffling into the sea.

On North Island we went ashore and camped for the night on the island's small stretch of flat rocks. Mexican fishermen had recently killed some young pelicans of the island's fine colony for bait; but there were many occupied nests, all with young, and mostly approachable. These great birds are remarkably tame, in spite of regular persecution. They nest all mixed up with the handsome western gull—so like our lesser blackback, or between it and the great blackback. On the island were colonies of two fine cormorants; one being the Farallon race of the double-crested cormorant that we had found on the eastern coast of the United States as a tree-nester, and here a bird of the cliffs. Also present was a cormorant new to me: Brandt's



Strings of brown pelicans patrol the U.S. Pacific coast. This fine bird was attending to its young in the great Coronado Island pelicanry just over the Mexican border

cormorant, a typical bird of the rocky Pacific coast. Some of us stayed awake at night to hear the black petrels coming in to their burrows, squalling and burbling underground; and towards dawn, in the light of our torches, we found, swimming about in the sea at the rocks' edge, one of the southernmost of that great tribe of auks of which the North Pacific is the evolutionary home: Scripps's murrelet, which nests in cracks and crannies among the boulders. After the thousands of miles of beach-coast of the eastern United States it was like coming home to a stage-setting resembling Britain's Skokholm or St Kilda, even if the ornithological cast was entirely different.

John Stow: Elizabethan Chronicler of London

by MONTAGUE WEEKLEY

ANYONE who saw the film version of *Henry V* will recall the splendid opening effect when the camera swept over a reconstruction of Shakespeare's London on its panoramic transit to the Globe Theatre in Southwark. This was the Elizabethan city of perhaps 100,000 to 200,000 inhabitants on which John Stow lavished the antiquarian zeal he embodied in *The Survey of London*, first published in 1598 and re-issued, with additions and revisions, in 1603.

Considering how few City churches escaped the near-holocaust of 1666 and the bombing of 1940-44, we have good reasons to be grateful for the survival of Stow's monument in St Andrew Undershaft, a church of that pre-Fire epoch to which he belonged. Here is part of what *The Survey* tells us about this church, rebuilt during the 16th century, wherein Stow was buried two years after the revised edition had appeared: "At the north-west corner of this ward [Aldgate], in the said high street, standeth the fair and beautiful parish church of St Andrew the Apostle; with an addition, to be known from other churches of that name, of the knape or undershaft; and so called St Andrew Undershaft, because that of old time, every year on May-day in the morning, it was used, that an high or long shaft or May-pole, was set up there, in the midst of the street, before the south side of the said church; which shaft when it was set on end and fixed in the ground, was higher than the church steeple."

Several years ago, the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society instituted a commemorative service at St Andrew's on a date near that of Stow's death, April 5. This year's commemoration on April 27 was lit by sunshine which smiled on the ceremony through the church's lofty perpendicular windows. The Lord Mayor and City Sheriffs, in full splendour of scarlet robes, fur tippets, and lace cravats, attended by the City Marshal, with mace- and sword-bearers, came to offer their yearly homage. The Lord Mayor's ceremonial sword was placed on a handsome sword-rest of heraldically painted wrought

iron, standing on one of the front pews.

Mr Lawrence Tanner, Keeper of Westminster Abbey's muniments and library, delivered a felicitous discourse on Stow from the pulpit, wearing Cambridge M.A. gown and hood, with white bands at his collar. When his tribute had ended, the Lord Mayor, Sheriffs, clergy, and Mr Tanner advanced in procession to Stow's marble and alabaster monument, where, after a prayer in remembrance of Stow, Mr Tanner drew last year's quill pen from the effigy's right hand and the Lord Mayor performed the annual rite of inserting a new one. The Lord Mayor then presented a copy of *The Survey*—apparently C. L. Kingsford's two-volume edition—to a girl in school uniform who had won an essay competition, while an attractive young schoolmistress received the old pen on behalf of the prizewinner's school. Perhaps the shade of Stow annually enjoys a more than heavenly rapture in contemplating this ceremony, for in his eyes London's civic splendours and the mayoral office were supremely worshipful.

Stow partly owes his pre-eminence among British topographers to two slices of luck: *The Survey* is not only a unique pre-Fire record but a description of Shakespearean London. It is as though there had been a Florentine Stow, contemporary with Dante. Unfortunately this indefatigable antiquary was too much a self-educated philistine to be capable of grasping the opportunity which his times presented to him. He makes only a casual reference to London's theatres in their golden age:

"And neare thereunto [Holywell, Shore-ditch] are builded two publique houses for the acting and shewe of comedies, tragedies, and histories, for recreation. Whereof one is called the Courtein, the other the Theatre; both standing on the south-west side towards the field."

In his admirable essay on Stow, Charles Whibley lamented that this industrious chronicler "knew no more of Shakespeare than of Holbein." Stow was personally

Every year the anniversary of John Stow's death on April 5, 1605, is commemorated by a ceremony attended by the dignitaries of the City of London at which the Lord Mayor places a new quill pen in the hand of Stow's effigy in the church of St Andrew Undershaft in Leadenhall Street. Here the present Lord Mayor, Sir Noël Bowater, Bart, is shown performing this function



Terence Wilson

acquainted with Ben Jonson, but mayors, sheriffs and aldermen were the men he venerated.

He was born round about 1525 and lived until 1605, dying two years after the accession of James I, so that his retentive memory enjoyed a long retrospect. It enabled him, for instance, to tell Sir George Buck, the biographer of Richard III (killed in 1485 at Bosworth) that he had spoken with people who had seen Richard and described him as "a comely prince".

Stow's father and grandfather were tallow-chandlers who supplied the City church of St Michael, Cornhill, with lamp oil and candles. The grandfather, Thomas Stow,

directed that his body should "be buried in the little green churchyard of St Michael, Cornhill, nigh the wall as may be by my father and mother." A recurring autobiographical note is one of *The Survey's* abiding charms. Memories of his father's house in Throgmorton Street furnish an instance of Thomas Cromwell's tyranny :

"On the south side, and at the west end of this church [that of the Augustine Friars], many fair houses are built; namely, in Throgmorton street, one very large and spacious, built in the place of old and small tenements by Thomas Cromwell, master of the king's jewel-house, after that master of the rolls,



D.I., Crown copyright

The George Inn, Southwark. "From thence towards London bridge, on the same side, be many fair inns for recepit of travellers, by these signs, the Spurre, Christopher, Bull, Queene's Head, Tabarde [Chaucer's Canterbury Pilgrims], George, Hart [White Hart of Pickwick], Kinge's Head, etc."—Stow: The Survey

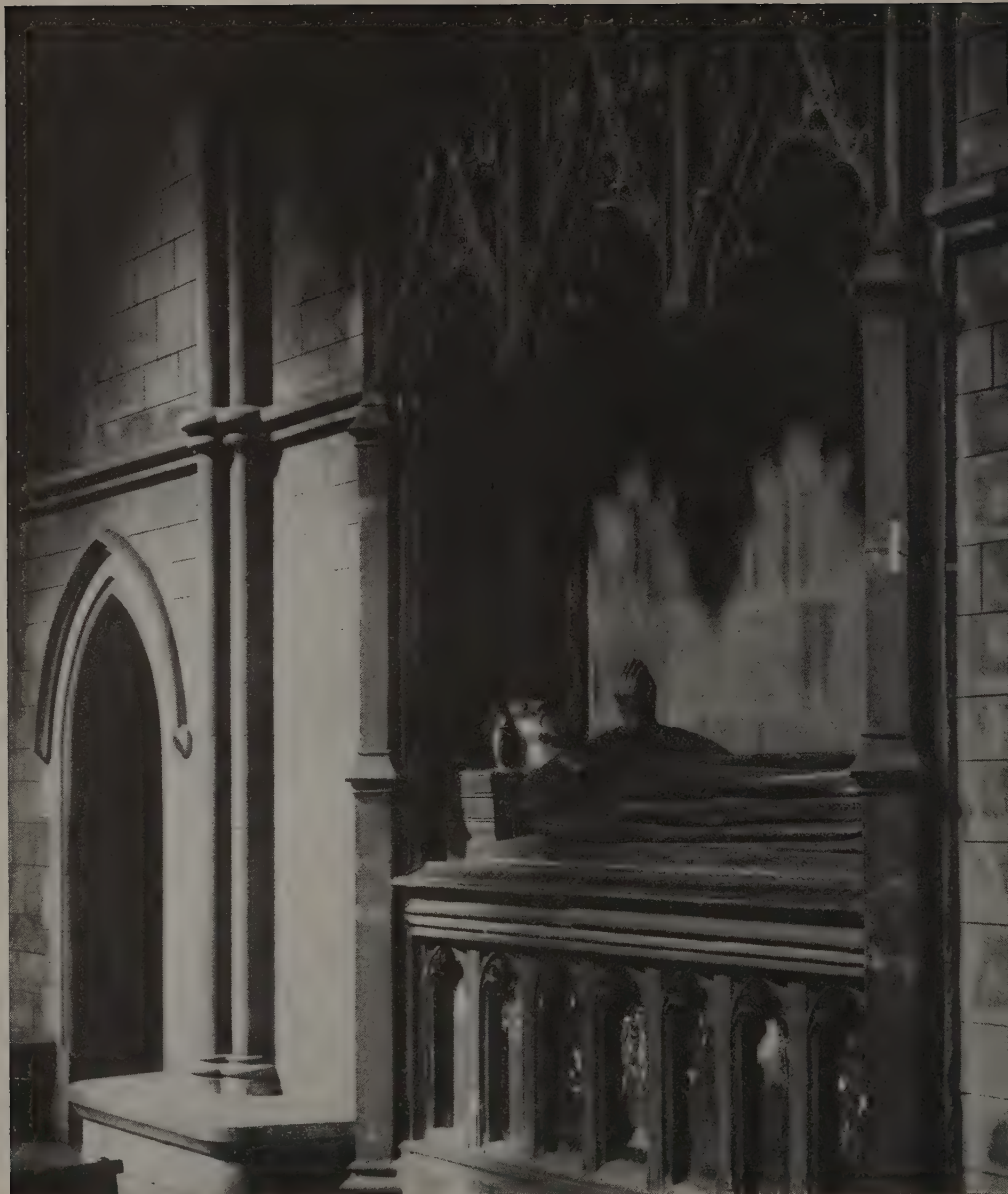


Larkin Brothers



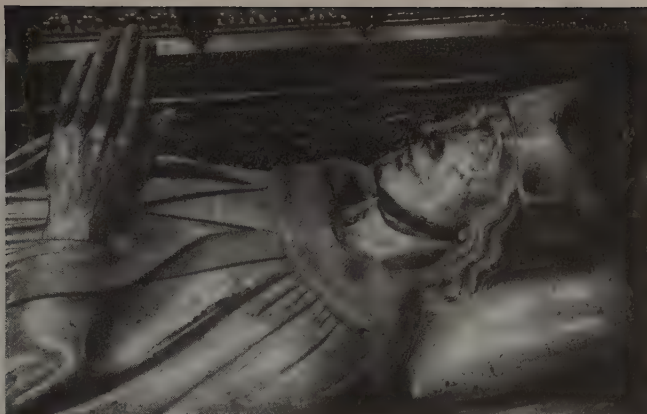
(Above) Staple Inn, Holborn.
"Then is Staple Inn, also of Chancery, but whereof so named I am ignorant; the same of late is for a great part thereof fair built, and not a little augmented."

—Stow: The Survey
 (Left) London Stone, set in the base of the wall of bombed-out St Swithun's church, Cannon Street.
"In the year 1450, Jack Cade, and other rebels of Kent, by this bridge [London Bridge] entered the city: he struck his sword on London Stone, and said himself then to be lord of the city, but were by the citizens overcome on the same bridge, and put to flight."
 —Stow: The Survey

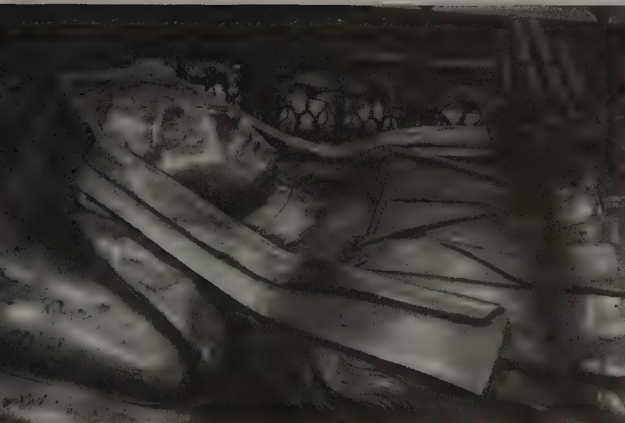


R. P. Howgrave-Graham, F.S.A.

Effigy of John Gower, Southwark Cathedral. "John Gower, esquire, a famous poet . . . : he lieth under a tomb of stone, with his image, also of stone, over him: the hair of his head, auburn, long to his shoulders, but curling up, and a small forked beard; on his head a chaplet, like a coronet of four roses; a habit of purple, damasked down to his feet; a collar of esses gold about his neck; under his head the likeness of three books, which he compiled."—Stow: The Survey



R. P. Howgrave-Graham, F.S.A.



P. Howgrave-Graham, F.S.A.

Effigies of Henry VII (top) and his Queen, Elizabeth of York (middle), in the Henry VII Chapel, Westminster Abbey. (Right) One end of the rich tomb designed by Pietro Torrigiani. "The altar and sepulture of the same King Henry VII, wherein his body resteth in this his new chapel, was made and finished in the year 1519 by one Peter, a painter of Florence; for the which he received one thousand pounds sterling for the whole stuff and workmanship at the hands of the King's executors . . ."—Stow: The Survey



R. P. Howgrave-Graham, F.S.A.



British Museum

(Above) Part of a panoramic view, showing the Southwark approach to London Bridge, 1618. Heads on poles surmount its gateway. St Mary Overy (now Southwark Cathedral) stands in the foreground. The Tower lies north-east. (Below) A 17th-century Lord Mayor. The Lady Mayoress is seen opposite

British Museum





British Museum

(Above) A contemporary engraving of Gresham's Royal Exchange, built 1566–71. The golden grasshopper, which was the crest of Sir Thomas Gresham (1519–1579), appears on the central column and also on the two roof-turrets. Stow described the state opening of the Exchange by Elizabeth I in 1571

British Museum



then Lord Cromwell, knight, lord privy seal, vicar-general, Earl of Essex, high chamberlain of England, etc. This house being finished, and having some reasonable plot of ground left for a garden, he caused the pales of the gardens adjoining to the north part thereof on a sudden to be taken down; twenty-two feet to be measured forth right into the north of every man's ground; a line there to be drawn, a trench to be cast, a foundation laid, and a high brick wall to be built. My father had a garden there, and a house standing close to his south pale; this house they loosed from the ground, and bare upon rollers into my father's garden twenty-two feet, ere my father heard thereof; no warning was given him, nor other answer, when he spake to the surveyors of that work, but that their master Sir Thomas commanded them to do so; no man durst go to argue the matter, but each man lost his land, and my father paid his whole rent, which was 6s. 6d. the year, for that half which was left. Thus much of mine own knowledge have I thought good to note, that the sudden rising of some men causeth them to forget themselves."

The thoroughfare, extending from Aldgate to Tower Hill, known as the Minories, commemorates a nunnery belonging to the Order of St Clare. It was a house of minoresses, Franciscan nuns; whence the name Minories:

"Near adjoining to this abbey, on the south side thereof, was sometime a farm belonging to the said nunnery; at the which farm I myself in my youth have fetched many a halfpenny worth of milk, and never had less than three ale pints for a halfpenny in the summer, nor less than one ale quart for a halfpenny in the winter, always hot from the kine, as the same was milked and strained. One Trolop, and afterwards Goodman, were the farmers there, and had thirty or forty kine to the pail. Goodman's son being heir to his father's purchase, let out the ground first for grazing of horses, and then for garden-plots, and lived like a gentleman thereby."

Goodman's name is perpetuated after four centuries by Goodman Street, and Goodman's Yard, a courtway off the Minories.

We know nothing of Stow's formal education, although the section in *The Survey* "Of Schools and Other Houses of Learning" expatiates on London's great schools at that period: St Paul's, Westminster, Merchant Taylors, and the once renowned St Anthony's, of which Sir Thomas More and Dean Colet, the founder of St Paul's, were *alumni*. For-saking the family tradition of chandlery, Stow served his apprenticeship to a tailor and

was admitted to the freedom of the Merchant Taylors' Company on November 25, 1547, ten months after Henry VIII's death. He set up business in a house within Aldgate, by the well which was later covered by a superstructure and became widely known as "Aldgate Pump". Here in 1549 Stow witnessed an execution staged almost on his own doorstep:

"Soon after was there a commotion of the commons in Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, and other shires; by means whereof, straight orders being taken for the suppression of rumours, divers persons were apprehended and executed by martial law; amongst the which the bailiff of Romford, in Essex, was one, a man very well beloved; he was early in the morning of Mary Magdalen's day, then kept holiday, brought by the sheriffs of London and the knight-marshal of the well within Aldgate, there to be executed upon a gibbet set up that morning, where, being on the ladder, he had words to this effect: 'Good people, I am come hither to die, but know not for what offence, except for words by me spoken yesternight to Sir Stephen, curate and preacher of this parish, which were these: He asked me, 'What news in the country?' I answered, 'Heavy news.' 'Why?' quoth he. 'It is said,' quoth I, 'that many men be up in Essex, but, thanks be to God, all is in good quiet about us': and this was all, as God be my judge," etc. Upon these words of the prisoner, Sir Stephen, to avoid reproach of the people, left the city, and was never heard of since amongst them to my knowledge. I heard the words of the prisoner, for he was executed upon the pavement of my door where I then kept house."

The keynote of *The Survey* is an engaging, if unimaginative, civic pride. Stow glories in the City's merchant rulers, their munificent bequests and charities, their monuments in its several churches, the delights of May Day celebrations and other traditional festivities. The narrow vision which dealt so faithfully with the face of London, its feasts, and its parchment archives, was blind to the romance of a human confluence where the taverns were noisy with voyagers who had beheld the new world, military adventurers, and traders from what were then remote corners of the globe. The greatest Elizabethan seaman finds a merely incidental place in a passage about "Elbow lane in Dowgate Ward, where lay the great old house called the Erber . . . lately new built by Sir Thomas Pullison, mayor, and . . . afterwards inhabited by Sir Francis Drake, that famous mariner."



By courtesy of the Society of Antiquaries of London

Old St Paul's in 1616. From Paul's Cross, in the foreground, a bishop is preaching in the presence of the king; courtiers, judges and officials occupy the galleries which adjoin the royal box

Stow's other works, an edition of Chaucer, *A Chronicle of England*, and editions of such earlier chroniclers as Matthew Paris and Thomas Walsingham, lie forgotten in the limbo of dead antiquarianism. For some years he must have been not too unprosperous in business, since he bought many books and also acquired an important collection of manuscripts, some of which are now in the British Museum. His antiquarian enthusiasm encroached, however, so heavily on his trade as a tailor that his latter years were spent in poverty, although perhaps too much has been made of James I's letters patent of March 8, 1604, authorizing the collection for Stow's benefit of "voluntary contributions and kind gratuities".

Edmund Howes, Stow's literary executor, bequeathed a pen-portrait which is partly misleading:

"He was tall of stature, lean of body and face, his eyes small and crystalline, of a pleasant and cheerful countenance; his sight and memory very good; very sober, mild, and courteous to any that required his instructions; and retained the true use of all his senses unto the day of his death, being of an excellent memory. He always protested never to have written anything either for malice, fear, or favour, nor to seek his own particular gain or vain-glory; and that his only pains and care was to write *truth*. He could never ride, but travelled on foot unto divers cathedral churches, and other chief places of the land to search records. He was very careless of scoffers, back-biters, and detractors. He lived peacefully, and died of the stone colic, being four-score years of age."

Stow is not the only *dear old man* whose alleged amiability cannot bear close scrutiny. He could, in fact, be cantankerous, and too eager to snatch a chance of scoring off a rival chronicler. There was a series of acrimonious exchanges between Stow and Richard Grafton, whose *Abridgement of the Chronicles of England* appeared in 1563. Stow remarked that the second edition of this work, issued during the following year, "being little better was as much or more of all men disliked". Grafton retorted with a sneering comment on Stow's *Summarie of Englyshe Chronicles*: "memories of superstitious foundations, fables, and lies foolishly stowed together". In his epistle dedicating the *Summarie's* abridged edition of 1567 to the Lord Mayor and Aldermen, Stow invoked their protection for the book "that through the thundryng noyse of empty tonnes and unfruitful graftes of Momus' [god of Greek myth-

ology personifying mockery and censure] off-sprynge it be not (as it is pretended) defaced and ouerthrowne".

Stow's narrative (incomplete) of the quarrel leading to a protracted feud between him and his unpleasant younger brother Thomas, who had been apprenticed to him in his tailoring business, has a racily Pepysian flavour, markedly different from *The Survey's* sober style.

During the summer of 1568 their mother called at John Stow's where they discussed family affairs over "the best ale and bread and a cold leg of mutton". Unfortunately, the mother lived with the Thomas Stows, and when she returned home, the ruffianly Thomas and his disreputable wife subjected her to a third degree inquisition: what had she and John said? They succeeded in extracting from the feeble old woman an admission that John had deplored the fact that Mrs Thomas Stow was no better than she should be, whereupon they bullied old Mrs Stow into changing her Will to provide that John would receive only £5 and each of her other children £10. "Thus", commented Stow, with sardonic humour, "was I condemned and paid five pounds for naming Thomas his wife an harlot, privily only to one body, who knew the same as well as I; but if he could so punish all men that will more openly say so much he would soon be richer than any lord Mayor of London." Thomas himself had no illusions about his wife and not long after he chased her out of the house. When she stole back at night, Thomas, "being bare-legged, searched and found her, and fell again a beating of her, so that my mother, being sick on a pallet, was fain to creep up, and felt all about the chamber for Thomas his hosen and shoes, and crept down the stairs with them as well as she could, and prayed him to put them on lest he should catch cold. And so my mother stood in her smock more than an hour, entreating him for the Lord's sake to be more quiet". Eventually Thomas and his wife retired to bed, but the old woman caught her death of a cold and never rose from her pallet again.

Some of the foregoing comments may appear to be ungrateful. They are not intended to depreciate *The Survey*, a classic which will always captivate readers responsive to antiquity's spell. Posterity would, however, have been still further indebted to Stow if, less absorbed in London as a civic community, he had also told us something of its dazzling Elizabethans among whom he was privileged to live.

My Worst Journey—VIII

by ALAN ROSS

The present article continues a series in which some of our more distinguished contributors place their memorably abhorrent journeys in scales of badness that they have chosen for themselves. Mr Ross, as the author of three books about Mediterranean islands, might well be reckoned a traveller; his personal definition of bad journeys, excluding "travel", produces one hard to match

THE worst journeys are rarely those in which physical discomfort is greatest. If one really wants to go somewhere one can, and does, put up with anything. The bad journeys are those one does not want to take, and which are of uncertain duration. Most of my travelling life has been confined to the shores of the Mediterranean, with intervals in India and Iraq. Europe is altogether too near and civilized to merit the word "travel"; more properly, France, Scandinavia, Germany, Switzerland and all but Southern Italy are "visited". Visits are not necessarily agreeable all the same, but I think the distinction is valid.

Wartime journeys do not strike me as genuinely coming under the heading of travel, except in the most ironic sense. Yet for me they were the only journeys I can truthfully call "bad", as opposed to boring. I shall therefore detach from a number of similar wartime trips one considerably worse than the others at the time, though now it is somewhat blurred by romantic haze.

In 1942 I was uncomfortably, but not unhappily, ensconced in an old "V & W" class destroyer, the *Vivien*. Our weekly beat was Rosyth to Sheerness and back. It lasted five days in all, and included two nights at action stations, one each way, in E-boat Alley. Earlier and later in the war they were often lively; in 1942 as quiet as cruises. Shortly before Christmas we put in to Rosyth for *Vivien* to refit, and the starboard watch, of which I was one, set off on a month's leave. I had a variety of personal and otherwise pressing engagements, long schemed, postponed and now arranged, and I began happily to fulfil them. On December 20 I received a telegram requesting me to report immediately to the Admiralty. Twenty-four hours later I was on my way to Scapa Flow to join an unnamed ship for an unspecified destination.

From Euston to Thurso, the northern Scottish port from where the steamers left for Scapa, I stood the whole way. All sleepers and seats had long since been booked, and the corridors of the train were so bulging with

men, kitbags and hammocks that it was even impossible to get to the lavatory. We left, I think, about 11 p.m. and arrived in Thurso very late the next night.

I have no recollection of the boat trip to Scapa Flow, but I remember a quite extraordinarily disagreeable night in a base-ship infested with rats and which offered, on awaking, a liberal selection of cockroaches. I had not yet, incidentally, been commissioned and my rating at the time was Ordinary Seaman. The job I was about to perform involved the interception and decoding of German signals, and depended on a brand-new receiving set which was still in the experimental stage and virtually unknown throughout the fleet. Like all innovations, it was regarded with deep suspicion.

The base-ship was bitterly cold, and so crowded that I had to sleep on the deck, all available hammock room being occupied by grizzled A.B.s who had been on board so long they had acquired complete proprietary rights over everything and everybody.

Next morning I joined H.M.S. *Onslow*, a destroyer flotilla-leader, where I was billeted in a Seamen's Mess. Here, too, I was supernumerary, and, again having nowhere to sling my hammock, was forced to stretch out on the lockers. This meant getting up every time the watch changed during day or night, for essential garments were stored in these lockers. It also meant that for the next month I was never able to sleep more than three hours at a time.

We got under weigh immediately, and, making for Iceland, turned into a head sea. We had, it appeared, an urgent rendezvous at Seydisfjörð, necessitating as fast a speed as we could manage. For almost two days we made as near 30 knots as makes no difference. The decks were continually under water, life-lines were rigged fore and aft, and along these men staggered to gun positions and the bridge as if in the last stages of drunkenness.

We sighted Seydisfjörð just before midnight the second day out, red and green lights marking the mineswept channel, and a great

shield of light hanging over the port which glittered like a night-club at the base of snow-covered leonine headlands. We anchored in the still black waters of the inlet, and waited our turn to go alongside an oiler.

Next morning we were allowed ashore for a couple of hours. A pale pink sun gave the snow the appearance of candy floss and the air was as fizzy as champagne. The port consisted of some wooden huts, a few shops and a jetty. Before going ashore we were lectured on the pro-Nazi sympathies of the Icelanders. Silk stockings, then the rarest of luxuries, were available, for some reason, at the chemists, and a favourite trick of the assistants was to say to sailors, untruthfully, that none were in stock, but that they could be procured, and when was the latest they could be picked up? Iceland harboured an unusual number of German transmitting sets, and, not long before, a ship, laden with last-minute purchases of silk underwear, had been torpedoed not a hundred yards from the fjord mouth.

It was now December 24, and in view of the evident, though as yet undisclosed fact that we should not be on an even keel for many hours more, Christmas lunch was taken. Sodden with rum, turkey, onions (without which no mess-deck meal was ever complete) and Christmas pudding I expired gently on my wooden couch, swollen hammocks swinging above me to stertorous grunts, belches and snores.

About 6 o'clock, the bo'sun's mate piped that the Captain would shortly be speaking to the ship's company over the loudspeakers. Soon, after a lot of crackling, testing and choking noises, of the sort to suggest that each successive speaker had been strangled by unseen Gestapo agents, the firm, kindly and measured voice of the Captain, R. St V. Sherbrooke, issued its expected message: "I wish you all a Happy Christmas and that it could have taken place in happier circumstances . . . As you have probably guessed, we are escorting a major convoy of fifty ships to North Russia . . . the days are at their shortest, and I think we have a reasonable chance of getting through . . . Good luck."

We slipped at midnight, moving down again along the winking channel, and turning, once free of the mountains, into a half-gale. The convoy had already assembled in three lines, and behind us the rest of the escort, including three other "O" class destroyers, *Offa*, *Oribi* and *Onslaught*, the *Ashanti*, and *Bramble*, a fleet minesweeper, slid into pre-arranged positions. Sherbrooke, as Captain (D), was in charge of the whole

proceedings from now on, though he had told us that we would be shadowed, at some fifty miles distance, by Force X, consisting of two cruisers, *Sheffield* and *Jamaica*. They would always be at least two hours' steaming away, so it seemed a doubtful comfort.

For the first day or so out we were visited occasionally by Coastal Command aircraft and by a variety of sea-birds. The sea was a dull, leaden grey, the sky barely any lighter, and they spilled into each other with remorseless monotony. It was extraordinarily cold, the guns having to be trained every hour to avoid them being frozen up, and water quickly seeped into the mess decks, where the atmosphere was fuggy, with a cold lining to it. My signal-receiving set failed to produce a squeak, since we were still, we hoped, well out of range of surface units.

The second night out it really blew up, and from then on I was sick with boring regularity. The smell of the battened-down Mess nauseated me, as did the smells of stewing tea and toast, and the gargantuan appetites of my companions. For several hours each day and night I sat, green and wretched, in the wireless office. For a week I ate and slept hardly at all. During that period weather conditions kept the sea free of enemy planes and ships. Once a U-boat was reported some way south, but it never came within striking distance. The convoy tilted and sprawled and lagged and took in heavy seas. It was dark practically the whole time.

On the night of the 29th H.M.S. *Bramble* disappeared. She was in the rear of the convoy, no signal was received from her, but in the morning she had gone. She was never seen again.

When we were somewhere between North Cape and Bear Island, that is to say at our nearest point to German-held Norwegian bases, five of the larger type of German destroyers were sighted to the south-west of the convoy. These, it later became apparent, were decoys, and wisely, as well as brilliantly prophetically, Captain (D) detached only one of the escorts to remain between the Germans and the convoy, but not to provoke attack. That relationship remained constant for some hours.

Soon after dawn on December 31, two major units of the German fleet were seen bearing down on us off our port bow. These were identified as the *Hipper* and the *Lützow*. The convoy was soon under fire, to draw which Sherbrooke gave the order "destroyers join me" and led *Offa* and *Oribi* full tilt at the German ships.

A signal, embodying the magic but, to most ratings, ominous phrase "I am about to engage the enemy", was immediately sent off to the Senior Officer, Force X, and it was reckoned that, all else being equal (which it seldom was), the *Sheffield* and *Jamaica* could be on the spot in two hours. It was 9 a.m.

To those in the wireless office two hours seemed a very long time for half-a-dozen destroyers to defend a convoy of fifty ships from air and possible submarine attack, from five large destroyers of greater fire-power and two pocket battleships obviously in earnest. A great deal of violent swearing took place.

My memory of the encounter is only clear in trivialities, for battles are private not public affairs. I remember us swerving for long periods at great speed trying to make a torpedo attack, but each time we came broadside on the enemy turned away. Since their range was so much bigger than ours, it was essential for us to get as close as possible. I believe we hit them more than once with 4.7s and started several small fires amidships; certainly, we drew their attention quite successfully. The convoy, under much reduced escort, altered course to the east and was soon safely out of reach.

A tremendous storm now blew up and heavy snow fell. All manoeuvrings (in which we were the aggressor) were interrupted and contact was temporarily lost. Behind us the *Ashanti* diligently laid a smoke-screen.

When the weather cleared an hour later, the advantages of our initial counter-thrust, which had taken the Germans by surprise, were found to have dissolved. We were sitting pretty for them, and, comfortably in their range but not in ours, they hit us with three salvos in succession. The radar turret was blown off and the for'ard part of the ship set on fire. A stray piece of shrapnel hit Captain Sherbrooke in the eye, which, as a result, he lost, but this was not known at the time and he continued to direct operations until the end of the battle.

With many killed, a heavy list to starboard and the for'ard mess decks ablaze, we continued to narrow the range. Had Sherbrooke turned away, not towards, we should undoubtedly have been sunk, for the Germans, naturally anticipating evasive tactics,

fired their next salvos, which would have been the annihilating ones, at where we should have been. As it was, we had time to reorganize.

All I remember now is the bitter cold on deck, the sea sliding and hissing up the tilting steel as we passed buckets in a human chain; and then dazedly holding a hose at the flames swaying and crackling over the for'ard magazine, the air so full of smoke that at moments my isolation was such that I began to wonder if everyone had abandoned ship and I was the only man left on board. I remember the gasps of dying men, the same whistling staccato as the grunts of out-of-training civilians struggling with knees-bends and press-ups, the giant cauliflowers of smoke, the black water slopping back and forth over the death-bruised faces of the ammunition-party, dead to a man under the trestle tables of my Mess. The dead had no claims to attention. And, mostly, I remember that hoarse shout of triumph which rose up, at the moment of near despair, when the guns of the *Jamaica* and *Sheffield* boomed out on the far side of the unsuspecting Germans. They had arrived two minutes before schedule.

A miraculous calm descended, and, at a list of 45°, we, too, turned eastward towards Murmansk. In the next half-hour two German destroyers were sunk (by the *Sheffield*) and the *Hipper* and *Lützow* both badly damaged; on our side, the *Ashanti* was lost while laying her smoke-screen, and there were the casualties and damage suffered by ourselves. But we made port under our own steam, and not a ship in the convoy was touched.

For myself, the badness of the journey ceased, in a selfish way, from the moment the enemy were sighted. The excitement must have done something profoundly satisfactory to my stomach, for I was never sick at sea again.

I spent a month in Russia, too drab an experience to deserve recall. Captain Sherbrooke was awarded the V.C., but the *Onslow* was unable to bring a convoy back and I transferred to a minesweeper. A merchantman was torpedoed a few hundred yards to port the second day out, and again I was supernumerary. But I was at least going in the right direction.

A Farm in Northern Norway

by GÖRAN ALGÅRD

Nor far from the point where the Swedish and Finnish frontiers meet that of Norway, and only 200 miles from North Cape, Europe's most northerly point, stands the farm of Tverelvmo. But although it is so far north, the area enjoys a surprisingly mild climate, owing to the North Atlantic Drift—the body of warmer water, originating from the Gulf Stream, which is responsible also for Britain's temperate weather. Yet in other respects the climate of this corner of northern Scandinavia reveals that it lies well within the Arctic Circle: snow is at least as frequent as rain; in winter the sun never rises above the horizon for two long months, so that at midday only a twilight glow is visible, while in summer the midnight sun fills the land with its yellow light.

The farm itself is situated in the Rosta Valley on the banks of the river, and is composed of some ten acres of arable land and several square miles of forest, mostly birch. As is customary in Norway, the farmer who in 1917 married the former owner's daughter and took over the farm adopted at the same time the name of the family that had owned it. Albert Sörenson, as he then was, came from the coast, where he had been a fisherman at Tromsøysund, exchanging the companionable life of that suburb of Tromsø for the loneliness of a homestead whose nearest neighbour is miles away. However, this isolation is some-

times broken by occasional visits of friends from as far away as Tromsøysund, as well as, more recently, by chats on the telephone. Other visitors are the Lapps, who pass by here every spring and autumn to the reindeer enclosure about fifteen miles away among the rugged mountains. They assemble in order to sort their reindeer herds and mark the calves, but, although the farm is the last outpost of civilization in these parts and Mrs Tverelvmo furnishes them with butter and bread, they do not very often show their gratitude by providing her with reindeer meat after the slaughter.

Wild life of various kinds abounds, and often provides a welcome addition to the cooking pot: hares and ptarmigan are frequently despatched, while in the river nearby trout are sometimes to be hooked, though the angler may have to try further up the river just below the falls.

All in all, then, the solitude at Tverelvmo is crowded enough to keep a family of five—the parents, now both over sixty years old, and their daughter and two sons—fully occupied throughout the whole year. What little respite remains from the customary labour of house and barn, field and byre, is filled by listening to the radio, keeping abreast of the latest developments in agricultural research, reading novels and—sometimes—the immemorial sagas of the North.



A. J. Thornton



All photographs by Göran Algård

(Above) *The Tverelumo farm, with its roof of turves and its drying milk-churns up-ended on poles. Beyond the arable land is a wide forest of sturdy silver-barked birches, which reach the vegetation limit of the forbidding mountains close to the Swedish border. Life on such a remote farm is hard, but the Tverelumo family find it rewarding; their isolation has its compensations though they are always ready to extend a warm welcome to their visitors. (Right) Albert Tverelumo, the owner of the farm, started life as a fisherman but moved here nearly forty years ago when he married, taking as is the custom the name of his wife's family and of the farm they had owned for a hundred years*







On the pastures surrounding the farm graze the livestock—consisting of four cows, a horse and a few sheep and goats. (Opposite) Mrs Anthone Tverelvmo gets up each morning at five to milk the cows so that the churns may be ready for the lorry at six. Baking, sewing, knitting and washing and all the daily tasks of a housewife keep her and her daughter Aslaug (above) busy, but the latter finds time in her spare moments to do embroidery as well, and the table-cloths, bedspreads, rugs and wall-hangings which decorate the farmhouse testify to the fact that idleness is unknown at Tverelvmo



(Opposite) The telephone has made life pleasanter for everyone at the farm, for it has to some extent pierced the besetting isolation. Mrs Tverelvmo, especially, benefits from it, since she can ring up the grocer's wife in Målselv at any time and have a chat with her. She can also help the Lapps, who regularly pass by the farm in the summertime, by putting through calls to their herd-liaison officer before reindeer-sorting begins. (Below) Every morning the milk is hauled over the river by a primitive but efficient "cable-railway". On the opposite bank the milk truck picks up the churns and, following the road, built in 1951, takes them to the dairy at Målselv, some forty miles to the north-west. This is the best method of despatch, as the milk-collector would lose too much time if he took the road leading directly to the farm





(Above) Asbjörn, the younger son, just returned from the river, fishing rod on shoulder. He and his elder brother are helping to construct a new road up to the farm. (Opposite) Scenes such as this, of stark yet tranquil beauty, compose the background of life at Tverelvmo farm





Bjarne, the elder son. When not at work on the road, which will soon be completed, or helping his father in the fields or wood-cutting, he spends his time shooting; occasionally he meets a bear, though the last time he did so both hunter and bear prudently turned tail and fled at the same moment!

Cinema in India

by B. D. GARGA

In a series of articles that we are publishing with the collaboration of Dr Manvell, Director of the British Film Academy, we now pass to such countries as India where a large-scale film industry has developed and where the film has begun to afford a true expression of the national spirit. The author, who has made both documentary and feature films in his own country, shows us where to look for this quality among India's enormous output of feature films—six times that of Britain

To the Western critic, the Indian film has failed to distinguish itself in the sense that the Italian, Russian and French cinema have done. Paul Rotha, for example, in his book *Film Till Now* found little virtue in our films and accused them of being "slow in movement . . . overloaded with songs . . . and depicting subjects mostly mythological and historical".

Paul Rotha is an acknowledged authority; I intend neither to challenge his assertions nor to hold a brief for the Indian cinema. But since he has voiced the opinion of many Europeans who see our films for the first time, I feel some comment on his criticism is necessary.

The cinema, like any other art, is peculiar to a people and the Indian film must also be viewed from this standpoint. What sent the American critic Theodore Huff into raptures over D. W. Griffith's film *Intolerance* left many noted critics cold. To Professor Huff *Intolerance* was "as beautiful as Da Vinci's Mona Lisa . . . the sculptures of the Parthenon . . . and the Ninth Symphony of Beethoven", but to others it was "obtuse and exhausting". This diversity of opinion is true not only of one particular film or critics of one country but of the cinema as a whole.

The tempo of life in India is totally different from what it is in Western countries. Our characters would look ludicrous were they to act or behave like a Londoner or a New Yorker who rushes through his work and relaxation.

It is true that the Indian film by Western standards is "overloaded with songs"; but in the absence of operas, ballets and music-halls existing as separate institutions, the Indian cinema, of necessity, had to fill all these gaps. It is also true that, till recently, mythology and history dominated the Indian film scene. But for this the Indian film is not so much to blame as the circumstances which engendered it.

At the turn of the 19th century, when efforts were being made to produce the first

Indian film, India was as yet barely touched by the industrial revolution which had swept over Europe. The vast majority lived by the plough. Education, as it is known in the West, was negligible. Social and political consciousness lay prostrate under an alien rule. Theatre, which had such an influence in shaping the early Western cinema, did not exist. Music and drama derived their inspiration from mythology and were confined to temples and palaces. Society was riddled with social stigmas and taboos.

In this context the first Indian film *Raja Harishchandra* was born in 1913.

It was no mere accident that *Raja Harishchandra* was a mythological film. The cinema is a commercial proposition and the producer, D. G. Phalke, knew he was safe in choosing a mythological subject for his first venture. The story of *Raja Harishchandra* was a legend dating back to the epic period when kings valued honour above thrones and the lust for gold and glory had not tarnished the soul of man. It depicted a world more fascinating than Disney's cartoons or Andersen's fairy tales. The film lifted the people out of their frustrated lives into an enchanting, unknown world of make-believe.

The outstanding success of *Raja Harishchandra* set the pattern of films to follow and *Lanka Dahan*, *Sati Savitri*, *Krishna Janam* and a host of others followed suit. The cinema had come to stay. It was not so much the triumph of a new art-form as the fact that it gave to a frustrated people visions of their legendary heroes and their heroic feats. From 1913 to 1925, therefore, when a number of film companies started functioning, mythology, legend and history provided the popular themes for our films.

The end of the silent era, around 1928, saw the first faint glimmer of the socially conscious film. It was a decade when Mahatma Gandhi's preachings were beginning to bear their first blossoms. Like ancient legends, his message had gone into the hearts of the people. It was certain of success at the box-



(Left) *Raja Harishchandra* (1913) was the first film made in India. The fact that its subject, like that of all early Indian films, was mythological helped to ensure its success. When it was made there were no Indian actresses and all the female roles were played by men. (Below) *Temple Dancer* (1926) described the Devdasi, women who lived in temples and devoted themselves to the service of the gods. Technically it was a great advance on its predecessors



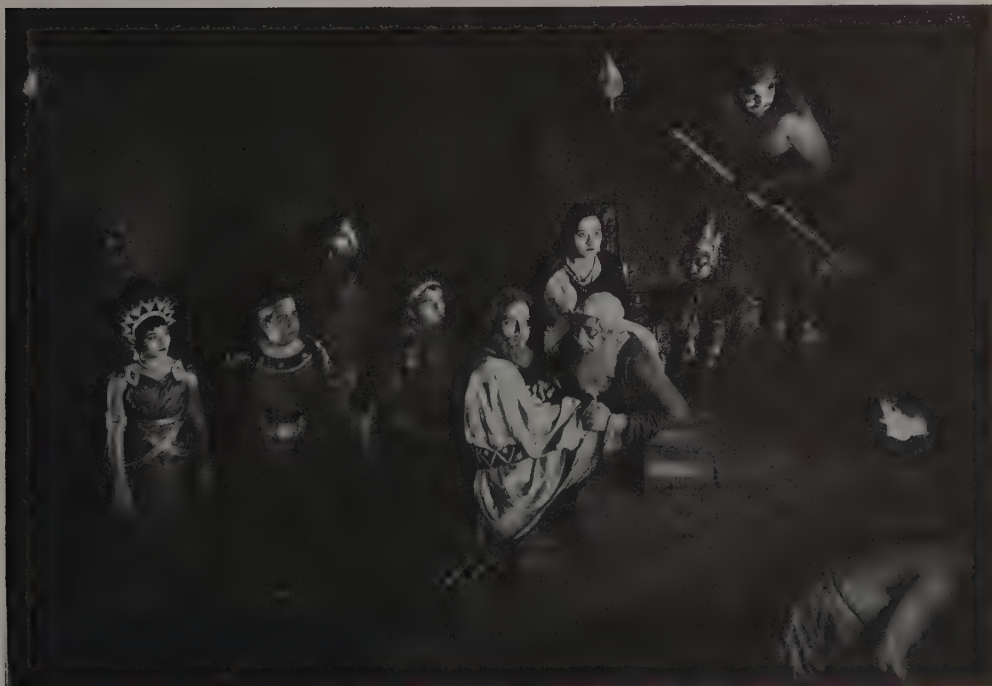
Right) *Indra Sabha* (1927) was set in the Lord Indra's heaven. It was a lavish production and though its subject was mythological it was largely influenced by Hollywood and the *Ziegfeld Follies*. (Below) *Anarkali* (1928) was the first of many films of the traditional story of Akbar's son, Prince Salim, who fell in love with a commoner: her ultimate fate was to be buried alive. This has proved to be an immensely popular subject in India





*The first film touching on a contemporary problem to be made in India was *The Bomb* (1928), which dealt with Gandhi's doctrines of Hindu-Muslim unity. It was banned but a heavily censored edition was later released under the name of *Wrath*; this emasculated version was not a success, but even so it marked the beginning of a new type of film*

(Right) *Cinema Girl* (1929) showed the influence of Hollywood at its peak. In the late twenties 80 per cent of imported films being shown in India were American and the Indian-made films were Indian only in name. (Below) *Yehoodi Ki Larki* (1932), one of the earliest Indian talking films, was based on a stage play of the same name by Aga Hashar Kashmiri, a well-known playwright whose plays, with the flowery dialogue and over-acting characteristic of the Parsi theatre at that time, were transferred to the screen without any concessions to cinema technique





National Film Library

One or two producers, led by P. C. Barua, brought a new realism to Indian films. Barua thoroughly understood the West without losing his sympathy for the problems of his own people. Mukti (1936) was a denunciation of those of his countrymen who aped Western ways without comprehending them

office; and the first of our films that touched on contemporary problems was produced by the Imperial Film Company. It is ironical that a picture which expounded the Gandhian philosophy of non-violence was entitled *The Bomb*. The ban that the Board of Censors imposed on this film was responsible, to a great extent, for retarding the growth of the socially conscious film by another decade.

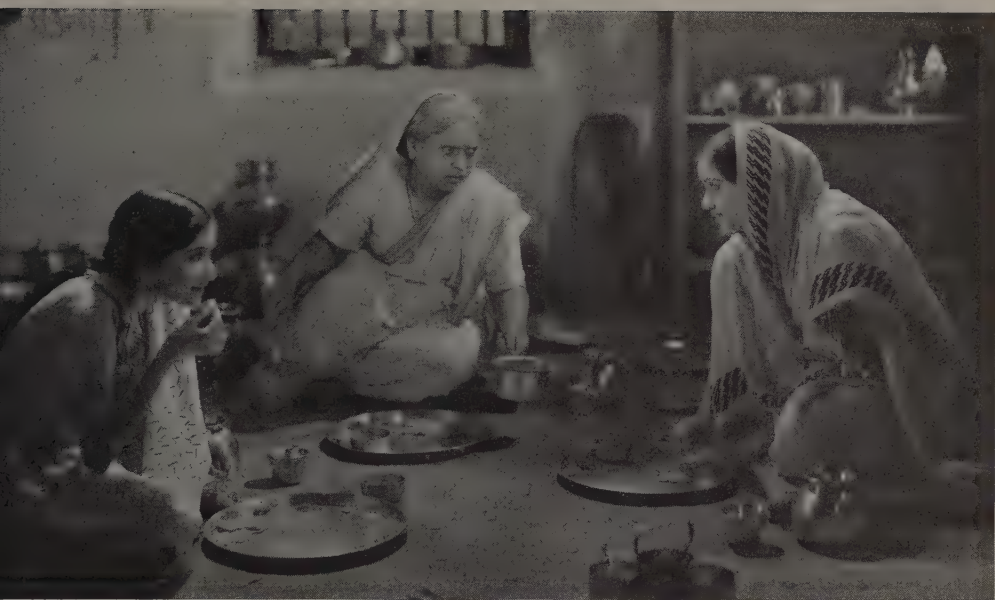
In 1931 the Imperial Film Company produced the first sound-film *Alam Ara*. The emphasis shifted entirely to music, songs and dialogue. As a result singers, writers and stars of the Parsi theatre, which was operating mainly in Bengal, switched over from the stage to the screen. Instead of adapting themselves to the needs and potentialities of the new medium, they carried all their stage ways to the screen. Aga Hashar Kashmiri and Pandit Betab, two well-known stage writers, dominated the film world. Hardly have any two persons in any country influenced the course of cinema more than these two in India. *Shirin Farhad*, *Laila Majnu*, *Yehoodi Ki Larki*, *Bilwa Mangal* and *Aurat Ka Pyar* were stage dramas on celluloid.

There are many spoken dialects in India and language became the first problem of the talkie screen. This spread film activity to

different linguistic areas, with little or no co-ordination between them. Film production centres sprang up in Bombay, Calcutta, Lahore, Madras and Poona. Bombay, however, remained the Hollywood of India.

From a commercial point of view the next few years were years of prolific productivity. Capital poured in from many sources and dividends rocketed sky-high. New studios and cinema halls sprang up all over the country. But, though an all-round progress did seem to be taking place, society as a whole remained wedded to deep-rooted religious dogmas and looked down upon the cinema as a profession fit only for street-singers and nautch-girls. This perhaps has been the greatest tragedy of the Indian film. For men and women who had the talent and imagination to become the future Chaplins, Disneys, Rossellinis and Garbos of our cinema remained aloof and took only a cynic's interest in it. Devoid of men and women of vision and culture, the Indian cinema could not lift itself from the morass into which it had sunk.

The growing popularity of American films which flooded the Indian market in the late twenties and early thirties confused the issue for indigenous production. Instead of evol-



*Shantaram and Debaki Bose, like Barua, produced films of social significance. (Above) The former's *Dunya Na Mane* (1936) exposed the evil consequences of marriage between an old man and a young girl. (Below) *Inqilab* (1937) by Debaki Bose was a symbolic film of lives revolutionized by an earthquake*





ish Film Academy & Roger Mansell Collections

With the end of the war films of greater quality began to appear: one of the first of these was Dharti Ke Lal (1945), a scathing indictment of the hoarders and black-marketeers whose avarice caused the death of hundreds of thousands in the Bengal famine. It was a semi-documentary, produced by K. Abbas



British Film Academy & Roger Mansell Collection

Kalpana (1945), produced by the world-famous dancer Uday Shankar who took the leading part, was significant for its unusually beautiful dance sequences, but failed for want of dramatic unity

ing a pattern nearer to our own way of life, the Indian producer, lacking in enterprise and initiative as he was, took the easy way out and modelled his own pictures after Hollywood's slick banalities.

A rigid police censorship was another factor which stifled the growth of films true to our own life and aspirations. Such were the vagaries and absurdities of censorship that a Yorkshire policeman once had the audacity to blue-pencil a quotation from Shakespeare! Such barriers to free expression and other handicaps left a deep scar on the Indian cinema. Like a child of unacknowledged parentage, it grew oblivious of its nationality and soil.

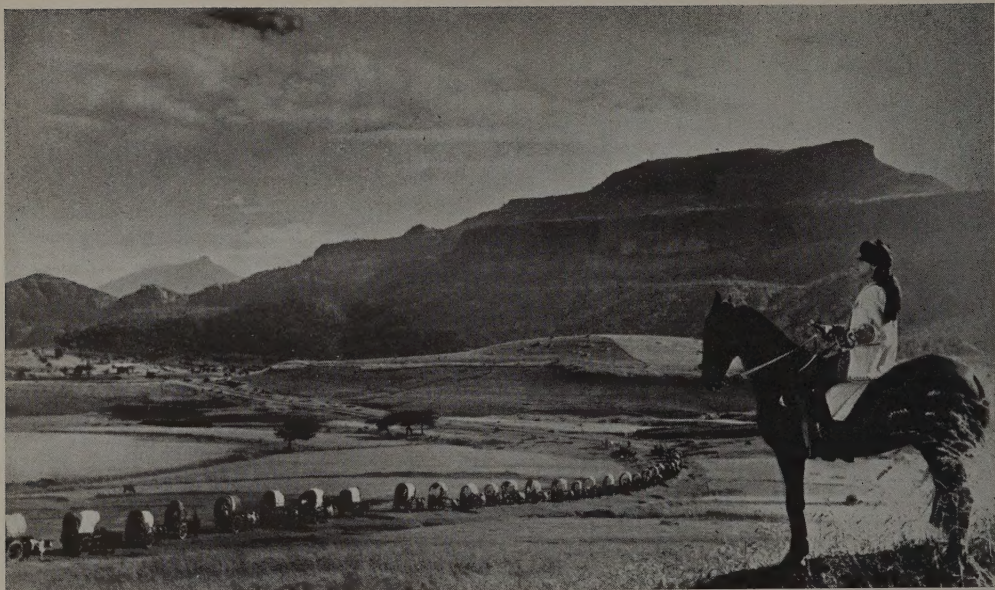
In these unhappy circumstances there were, however, men like the late P.C. Barua, Shantaram and Debaki Bose who brought a new freshness and realism to our cinema. Barua's first film *Devdas* (1935) was a complete departure from the hackneyed themes. Based on a story by Sharat Chandra Chatterji, a contemporary of Tagore, *Devdas* created a sensation. Like that of Hamlet, *Devdas* was the story of a man who could suffer greatly. Barua had the stamp of a master and it is no exaggeration to say that under more congenial working conditions he would have

been classed with the great names in world cinema. His pictures *Zindgi*, *Mukti*, *Manzil* and *Adhikar* gave the Indian cinema, perhaps for the first time, a new outlook and hallmark all its own. He may rightly be called the architect of the progressive movement in Indian cinema.

Shantaram and Debaki Bose also waged a ceaseless war to infuse a new aesthetic sensibility and national consciousness into the Indian film. Shantaram was a social crusader and his films *Admi*, *Dunya Na Mane* and *Padosi* not only tackled the burning problems of the day but were also fine examples of technique and treatment. Debaki Bose was the thinker and artist; like those of Capra, his pictures *Seeta*, *Vidyapati* and *Sapera* sang of the greatness of man.

The efforts of Barua, Shantaram, Debaki Bose and a handful of others, though very considerable in themselves, made little impression on the shape of Indian cinema as a whole. The majority of our films clung to stereotyped stories, plagiarized ideas and worn-out techniques.

At this stage, World War II overtook India, and 1939-45 became a boom period for the Indian film industry. Shortage of raw material and cinema equipment and the in-



(Above) *Aan* (1953), the first Indian colour film, was a lavish production on Cecil B. DeMille lines with little to commend it but its beautiful landscapes. (Below) *Jhansi Ki Rani* (1953), made with the assistance of a Hollywood Technicolor unit, was marred by tame treatment and lacked dramatic coherence

National Film Library





Do Bigha Zamin (Two Acres of Land) (1953), the story of a man whose land was taken for a factory-site, had something of the quality of the Italian Bicycle Thieves. In spite of its realism it proved a box-office success because of its fine acting and dramatic presentation of an urgent problem. It was made by Bimol Roy and won the International Prize at Cannes in 1954

roduction of licences and quotas discouraged the making of new experiments and the entry of fresh talent into the field. The faint hope which men like Barua, Shantaram and Debaki Bose had kindled was lost in the mania of get-rich-quick films. The success of each and every film—good, bad, indifferent—was almost a certainty. The results were disastrous. One after another our producers turned out stencilled copies of unconvincing historical films and juvenile boy-meets-girl melodramas. Qualities of technique and of presentation declined sharply. Lack of organization and coordination dealt the final blow and the industry lost all sense of values and direction.

The impact of the war, however, did one good thing: it released new social forces in the country. Age-old stigmas associated with the dramatic arts lost their meaning. Cultural consciousness assumed a new significance. Not only in cinema, but in every field of cultural and social activity a renaissance was in the air. The time was ripe for the Indian film to emerge as truly representative of the Indian people. Very slowly at first, but with growing momentum, the shape of our films began to change. The intelligentsia, for the first time, associated itself actively with this medium of expression. New Theatres' production *Hamrahi* pointed the way but on the whole the lead did not come from within. It came from without: from a non-professional group of intellectuals, writers and artists, many of whom were associated with the Indian People's Theatre—a cultural organization that gave a new dignity to the role of the dramatic arts in cultural life. Their first production, *Dharti Ke Lal*, told the stark truth about the tragic Bengal famine of 1942. The torch-bearers of the post-war Indian cinema took their hired cameras into the streets and fields of the country and, like their Italian contemporaries, brought cinema into direct contact with the people.

Dharti Ke Lal was followed by *Banbasi*, *Neecha Nagar*, *Kalpna*, *Parivartan* and '42'. From the box-office point of view, these early experiments were not successful. Shot in the open, with makeshift arrangements, they lacked showmanship and finish. The old school decried these efforts as amateurish. But the possibilities that these films opened up were not lost on the more enlightened producers. A quest for new themes and greater realism started. New Theatres, with which Barua and Bose were associated, took the lead and produced such pictures as *Chhota Bhai* and *Anjan Garh*. This example was fol-

lowed by others. Thus the seed for realistic film was sown.

There is no country today where cinema has as great a role to play as in India. Even with our prolific output of over 250 feature films a year—which incidentally is six times that of Great Britain—India's 600,000 far-flung villages are as yet unaffected by the greatest medium of expression and entertainment that man has hitherto known. The spectre of TV does not haunt the Indian film producer as it does his American or British counterpart. Ballet, theatre and radio are not within the reach of the average man in the city, much less the remote village where, as Gandhi said, lives the real India. But the cinema is a universal form of entertainment which can bring joy, happiness and enlightenment to the lives of 400 million people in this vast sub-continent.

We still have our great names like Shantaram, Mehboob, Kardar and Modi but their work lacks contemporary significance. It is unfortunate that these people, who are indeed masters of craftsmanship, have failed to align themselves with the renaissance that has swept over the Indian cinema. They are not fully alive to the role of the film in modern India. Their most elaborate pictures—*Parbat Pe Apna Dera*, *Andaz*, *Aan*, *Shahjahan* and *Jhansi Ki Rani*—are all like gilded frames around cheap prints. They have body but no soul, form but no content. Mention must be made here of a young producer, Raj Kapoor, whose films, such as *Awara* and *Barsat*, have technical excellence and are successful but are nevertheless made in the best Indian tradition.

The future of the Indian film is in the hands of such men as Bimol Roy, Abbas, Karthik Chatterji, "Agradoot" and Nema Ghosh. Their recent films *Do Bigha Zamin*, *Rahi*, *Yatrik Babla* and *Chinamul* have already won international acclaim.

To the Western critic, many of these films may still appear "slow in movement . . . and overloaded with songs". Be that as it may; but if our films are a mirror of our day-to-day life, then our cinema is fulfilling one of its chief purposes. And this, I think, cannot be better expressed than in Pudovkin's message that he gave to the Indian industry during the course of his visit: "What you want is films of ordinary people in their natural life, not just film stars in an artificial story . . . What India should produce is something full of its own particular variation on the universal themes . . . follow your own vision, your own people, your own landscape."